



# FIA Icon *online*

A product of the Michigan **Family Independence Agency**

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STATE OF MICHIGAN  
**Family  
Independence  
Agency**

September 15, 2003

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## My turn

By Nannette M. Bowler, Director  
Family Independence Agency




I am very pleased to report that our new employee suggestion initiative, **Heart of the Solution**, was started in July and has been an overwhelming success. Through mid-August people like you submitted 341 suggestions for improvements. There were 277 of those suggestions still in the review stage on Aug. 15, while we have accepted 17 – that are in process of being established – and denied 47.

Heart of the Solution uses web technology that allows you to follow the progress of your suggestion throughout the review and implementation stages. Perhaps more important, the system builds in greater

accountability by authors and provides me with monthly reports summarizing agency activity.

I hope each of you see this as evidence of my commitment to the value of employee inclusion and an example of my commitment to gather input from staff to work toward excellence in our services.

You can access this new process through our FIA-Net at the red heart. To track your suggestion you may log on to FIA-Net and go to  [Heart Of The Solution](#). If you have other questions please contact Sharon Zuzga [zuzgas@michigan.gov](mailto:zuzgas@michigan.gov) or Stan Parker [parkers@michigan.gov](mailto:parkers@michigan.gov), the FIA staff persons assigned to Heart of the Solution.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence and inclusion!

## Family Resource Centers in Priority Schools

By Jocelyn Vanda, Executive Assistant to the Director/Project Manager  
Family Independence Agency, Lansing  
[Vandaj@michigan.gov](mailto:Vandaj@michigan.gov)

Another new era began for the Family Independence Agency on August 26, 2003 with implementation of eight Family Resource Centers in seven elementary schools and one middle school. The centers are part of the Children's Action Network - sometimes known by the acronym CAN – which is a network of state agencies convened by Governor Jennifer M. Granholm to work collaboratively to better support Michigan's children and families.



### **FIA Icon online**

a publication of Michigan's  
**Family Independence Agency**

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Governor  
State of Michigan

### **Family Independence Agency**

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The CAN brings state agencies together such as the Michigan Department of Education, the Family Independence Agency, the departments of Corrections, Community Health, Information Technology and Consumer and Industry Services – to work across state department boundaries to strengthen children and families. The CAN also promotes cooperative efforts with nongovernmental, faith based and private sector organizations committed to improving the lives of Michigan's children



**Jocelyn Vanda**

As of Aug. 26, the FIA is the principal service agency in the school-based Family Resource Centers, which opened in schools in Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Mt. Clemens, Saginaw & Muskegon. One or more FIA specialists work in the centers. Both cash assistance and services specialists could work in the center based on caseload composition in the school. We informally call these school-based employees family resource specialists. More Family Resource Centers will open by the end of October in Adrian, Flint, Detroit, Taylor, Highland Park and Hamtramck.

While the Department of Education oversees improved leadership and professional development to better align curriculum to state content guidelines in "high priority" schools, the Family Resource Centers use an interdisciplinary approach to improve human service delivery to school-aged children and their families. The centers will serve as a "one stop shop" for family services located within or near a neighborhood school. FIA family resource specialists will work with students, their families and staff from local service agencies to help remove noneducational barriers to school performance. We believe if we ensure that children are at school on time and at school regularly, and enhance their ability to learn through human service supports, that academic school performance will improve. This is very important in the larger context since all Michigan schools are faced with the federal mandates associated with the No Child Left Behind Act.

Children and families referred to the centers by teachers or other personnel will receive a single assessment. Currently, a manual process is being used to assess needs. However, a commitment has been made to develop an electronic capability for a single assessment that will save workers time. Michigan Department of Information Technology staff members have been instrumental in assuring existing electronic data systems are connected by Aug. 26 and will be working on the electronic assessment capability. We will report more on program activities and successes later.

## **Intercepted letters**

**Date:** Aug. 22  
**To:** [FIAWeb@michigan.gov](mailto:FIAWeb@michigan.gov)  
**Subj:** ITTs

Our ITT people throughout the state deserve a big thank you for minimizing and correcting the damage done by the recent viruses and power outage. Work doesn't get done if our computer systems are on the blink. I'm thankful for their efforts and presence.

**Dave Parsons, Adult Services Specialist**  
**Ottawa County Family Independence Agency**  
**Holland**

# Letters policy

"Intercepted letters" is one of the most popular features in FIA Icon *online*. Correspondence submitted for publication must have the approval of the author in order to be printed. Unsigned letters and signed correspondence requesting the author's identity be hidden will not be published.

Correspondence from FIA customers or service applicants must be accompanied by a signed [Consent for Publication](#) form. This self-explanatory form can be downloaded from the MS Word template as form [0199.dot](#). The consent form must include the names of other family members cited in the letter. When correspondence comes from a minor, a parent must give approval by signing the consent form. When the author is not an FIA customer or service applicant, rules of courtesy apply and the author should verbally approve your decision to publish before correspondence is submitted.

**Date:** Aug. 6  
**To:** Jim Nye, Director  
FIA Field Operations, Lansing  
**Subj:** Thanks

I am writing this letter in appreciation for the time and energy you spent for the July 28 speaking engagement with the Michigan Leadership Development Program. Your explanation about the role that the Family Independence Agency plays in state government was thorough and engaging. I have learned a great deal from the knowledge and expertise that you possess in your field.

My placement in the Governor's Office was in Constituent Services. Undoubtedly, I learned a great deal about the extent in which government can and cannot help its citizens. I collaborated with other divisions in our office, as well as worked with state department liaisons to help resolve constituent concerns. I worked closely with issues specialist Elias Vasquez on cases relating to Family Independence Agency and Friend of the Court. Both Elias and myself greatly appreciate the contact names and phone numbers that you graciously gave me after the presentation. We look forward to working with those staff members in aiding our constituents and providing them the best service that we can possibly offer.

Thank you for being a part of my learning experience. I hope to one day take what I have learned and utilize it in my future political endeavors. Please pass on my appreciation to your secretary, Nancy Ulrey, for her help in dealing with one of our constituent cases. The follow-up that was done for that case was phenomenal.

[Nagmeh Shariatmadar](#)  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Date:** July 18  
**To:** Annette Wilde, Family Independence Manager  
Washtenaw County FIA, Ypsilanti  
**Subj:** Kim Beach

I am a Medicaid waiver eligibility specialist for the Area Agency on Aging I -B. My role is to enroll new clients in the waiver program and assist them with the Medicaid process. I work with many different eligibility specialists at FIA. I wanted to take the time to let you know that you have an exceptional worker. Her name is [Kim Beach](#). She always returns my calls in a timely manner and, anytime I have submitted paperwork to her, she completes it as soon as she can. Anytime I have questions, she is always willing to take time out her busy schedule and answer them for me. She is always pleasant and, in working with the elderly and disabled, is the type of person we need. I am sure you get reports when someone is not doing their job but I wanted to let you know that someone is doing a wonderful job.

[Sandy Smith](#)  
Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Ann Arbor  
■ Washtenaw FIA director Jim Beougher submitted this letter.

**Date:** June 4  
**To:** Charles Jones, Director  
FIA Office of Performance Excellence & DDS, Lansing  
**Subj:** My case

In regards to a letter I wrote Feb. 15, 2003 regarding possibly helping me expedite my case for Social Security Disability, I was the 27-year-old female that has progressive Multiple Sclerosis. I wanted to write this letter today to tell you thank you for writing me back. I know it is a while after the fact, but I wanted to for awhile now, and finally have enough energy to sit down and do so. I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter and actually write me back.

So many people have either not bothered to write me back or just sent me a reply saying sorry we can not help. You really explained a lot about the system in your

# FIA people

FIA director **Nannette Bowler**



**Howard Sweeney**

announced the appointments of **Howard Sweeney** as director of Clare-Isabella County FIA, effective July 20, and **Doug McCombs** as director of Alpena-Presque Isle County FIA effective July 7.



**Doug McCombs**

Former FIA official **Samuel Chambers Jr.** left state government to become president-CEO of Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries Aug. 1.



**Clarence Willis Jr.**



**Sandra Traylor**

Wayne County FIA director **Jerome Rutland** announced

organizational changes Aug. 4 including appointments of:

- **Sandra Traylor** in 18-month assignment as urban counties manager for the Accelerated Food Assistance Program Initiative.
- **Clarence Willis Jr.** as manager of Zone IX.
- **Sharon Jackson** is interim manager of Zone X.
- **Derle Barnes** as Western Wayne Child & Family Services District manager.
- **Tim McBrien** interim manager at the Hamtramck District.
- **Gwendolyn Bush** interim manager at Forest-Ellery District.

letter that I was not aware of that helped me understand more from the DDS side of it along with the (administrative law judge)'s side. So thank you for that. It did help ease my patience.

You should be in the front lines speaking to more people explaining how this system works. Too many people seem to go into this blind as I did and we all know lawyers do not explain anything to you. It is a confusing system as I am sure you know and even worse for people that are ill and really don't want to have to deal with anything but their illness in the first place.

I must say though that I am happy to report that I am now approved for SSDI and did not need a hearing. The MS has progressed sadly but we will now soon have the funds to help pay for the treatments I need. So again thank you for your time and thank you for mailing me back. It meant more then you'll ever know.

**Heather Smith**  
**Bay City**

**Date: May 25**  
**To: Dawn Bushouse, Community Resource Coordinator**  
**Lake & Newaygo County FIA**

**Subj: AmeriCorps & more**

I've been doing a lot of thinking about my days with FIA and AmeriCorps lately. There are a lot of exciting things going on in my life again – big changes. (I'm) trying as always to improve myself and my situation. You know, I have some lost time to make up for – all that time I spent whining before I met all of you!

Dawn, what about **Dave Jibson**, who had the faith in me that I could be somebody, and do something with my life, even before I knew it myself? He brought me to you. That man's belief in me changed my entire life! I went from being a depressed, frightened, victim of domestic abuse who believed she probably deserved whatever she got to a proud, satisfied, hard working, dependable wife and mother of five who can teach her children the meaning of self-respect because she knows it, not just because it's something she's heard about on TV.

Thanks to David seeing in me what I couldn't see in myself, and thanks to him having the courage, and determination to take time out of his busy life and work schedule to see to it that I had the skills I needed to work for AmeriCorps and the opportunity to do better in life. I am a real FIA success story. Even though I don't make millions I do what needs to be done and I am happy doing it. That's success, right?

Thanks to (Dave) my mother got her greatest wish granted before she died... to see me graduate. She'd talked about it my whole childhood, and when I quit school to have a baby at 15 years old it crushed her. David helped me and, four months later, the cancer won it's battle for my mother's life...but not before she won her battle for mine.

Like an angel would, he floated in and out of my life to help and be gone. I don't even know how to begin to thank him for saving what amounts to my soul, my very essence of life, but I'd sure like to see him again.

**Lanora Jewett**

**Hart**

■ The author is a former AmeriCorps enrollee in Newaygo County. Dave Jibson is an adult services specialist in Newaygo County FIA. Lake-Newaygo director Jim McCormick submitted this letter.

# WIN A 2003 FORD THUNDERBIRD And Help Prevent Child Abuse

First Prize - 2003 Ford Thunderbird

Second Prize - \$2,500 Cash

Third Prize - \$1,000 Cash

**ONLY 1,500 TICKETS SOLD!!**

**Drawing Oct. 14, 2003**

Tickets \$100 (one-hundred dollars) each

MI Raffle #R71976



*photo is not actual car in raffle*

## Cherish the Children Car Raffle Ticket Order Form

Fill out & return attached portion along with a check or money order to:

**Michigan Children's Trust Fund**

**235 S. Grand Avenue**

**Grand Tower Suite 1411**

**Lansing, MI 48933**

OR

## Call 1-800-CHILDREN to order tickets

(Credit Cards also accepted)

With your support, we have the opportunity to raise another \$100,000  
to help keep Michigan's kids safe

MI Raffle #R71976

Purchaser Name:	_____
Purchaser Address:	_____
Number of Tickets:	_____ Amount Enclosed: _____
Send tickets to:	_____
	_____

You need not be present at the drawing to win. Call 1-800-CHILDREN for info!

**Michigan Children's Trust Fund** is an independent unit of state government administered through the Family Independence Agency. Its administrative office is located in the Grand Tower Building, Lansing. Call (517) 373-4320 for more info.



## Foster care picnic in Genesee County

By Mary Smith, CPS Specialist  
Genesee County Family  
Independence Agency, Flint  
[Smithm33@michigan.gov](mailto:Smithm33@michigan.gov)

On Aug. 4 the Genesee County Children's District held it's 4th annual **Foster Care Picnic**. The picnic is held at the end of summer for children placed in foster care & relative foster care. Over 175 foster children, foster parents, relative providers and staff attended this year's event.

The picnic provides a positive and fun event that allows the children to focus on just being kids. This year's picnic was held at Bicentennial Park in Grand Blanc. A Grand Blanc fire engine was on hand for the children to tour and they also got to try on a fireman's suit. Everyone enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, salads, punch, cookies and snow cones. The children had a giant inflatable slide, inflatable castle moonwalk, horse rides and carnival games to enjoy. Adults entered a drawing to win prizes such as free pizza, free dinners and free donuts at local vendors.

The Children's District raised funds to support the project by having two casual days and obtaining donations from the director of Genesee County, **Denise Chambers**, Family Court judges and Flint-area businesses Meijer Inc., Target, Sam's Club and Young Oldsmobile Cadillac.

Many thanks go out to the Foster Care Picnic Committee – including members **Felicia Beadle, Mary Smith, Jamie Gaskin, Jennifer Hartzell, Jill Griffin** (supplied her horse), **Michelle Johnson** and **Tracey Mayer**. Also many thanks go to all of the employees who donated food and assisted with events at the picnic. The committee would also like to thank director Chambers and district manager **Sue Hull** for allowing the staff to put on the event each year.

## Dreams of diversity

### Adrian Training School celebrates first annual Diversity Day

By Roberto Valdez  
Adrian Training School, Adrian  
[ValdezR3@michigan.gov](mailto:ValdezR3@michigan.gov)

On June 19 Adrian Training School held it's first Diversity Day. The theme for the day was "Dreams of Diversity". The agency's Community Diversity Connection, in association with the Multicultural Committee, worked to organize and host the day for both youths and staff. There were a number of presenters from the Lenawee County area who shared a variety of cultural related experiences, making the day very successful.

"Dreams of Diversity" helped the youths and staff members of the Adrian Training School gain an appreciation and understanding of different cultures. When asked what ideas or thoughts impacted them the most one student replied, "I felt really moved by the Native American workshop. The music and dance was an incredible form of expression." Another student said, "The song at the end, 'Don't Laugh At Me', impacted me the most. We don't realize it, but we put people down every day and we should just accept people the way they are."

The cultures represented were African American, Native American, Hispanic, Japanese, Chinese, Israeli, Zimbabwean, Palestinian and visually impaired. Some guest speakers provided activities with their presentations. The activities included drumming and dancing to Native American music, origami, storytelling, writing names in Japanese and Chinese, and making God's eyes.

The day was a very enriching event and we hope it continues to be an annual event in the future!



**Members of Buffalo Thunder, a Native American drumming group, singing a song during lunch at Diversity Day. In background guest speakers enjoy the music.**

## Fraud awareness

By Alan Kimichik, Director, and Mary Gartland, LEIN Terminal Agency Coordinator  
FIA Office of Inspector General, Lansing  
[gartlandm@michigan.gov](mailto:gartlandm@michigan.gov)

Public trust and accountability to the people of Michigan requires efficient and responsible management of programs and financial and other resources. Program integrity assures that people receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled from both the agency and other agencies.

At the same time, FIA staff has to pursue all possible avenues to assure integrity of all programs. Issues of fraud, waste and abuse have to be vigorously pursued and overissuance of funds must be recovered by the state. The majority of Michigan residents who receive welfare benefits have a legitimate need for assistance. Unfortunately, a few people intentionally obtain benefits they don't deserve. These people are committing welfare fraud.

## Discovering and reporting welfare fraud

Workers may discover welfare fraud through normal casework, case readings and computer cross matches, quality control audit findings or welfare fraud hotline referrals.

Workers should refer to specific program policy on the welfare fraud referral process.

The responsibility for reducing welfare fraud and abuse falls upon the entire staff of the Family Independence Agency.

If you discover someone who is fraudulently receiving welfare benefits refer the case to the Office of Inspector General for investigation.

We can work together toward a common goal of reducing fraud and enhancing program integrity.

The FIA Office of Inspector General receives allegations of welfare fraud from staff who regularly work with welfare recipients or from the general public through the FIA's **Welfare Fraud Hotline**  
**1-800-222-8558**

Fraud is defined as acquisition or attempted acquisition, or the aiding and abetting of acquisition or the attempted acquisition of, property, income, rights or legal privilege by means of a willful false statement, false representation or impersonation, or by any scheme contrived to misrepresent true circumstances.

Welfare fraud involves a willful misstatement or omission of information or act by: vendors or providers of social services; volunteers; other agency personnel; or clients, any officer or employee of any county, city or district Family Independence Agency acting alone or in collusion with others, that would cause money, benefits, or services to be paid and/or rendered ineligible. Welfare recipients are committing fraud if they:

- Intentionally receive benefits from two or more states at the same time.
- Intentionally fail to report information or intentionally give incomplete or inaccurate information needed to make a correct benefit determination and the customer was clearly instructed regarding his or her reporting responsibilities and;
- The customer has no apparent physical or mental impairment that limits his or her understanding or ability to fulfill their reporting responsibilities.

### *Investigating welfare fraud*

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is responsible for conducting an investigation of complaints of alleged fraud in programs administered by the agency or in contractual agreements between FIA and providers, vendors or contractors. These include, but are not limited to, Family Independence Program, Food Assistance Program, Medical Assistance, Child Development and Care and the services programs.

All cases that are investigated and found to contain elements of fraud are forwarded to the appropriate state or county prosecuting authorities for disposition. OIG may also conduct special investigations or projects to determine the overall nature of program fraud in the state, and recommend policy and procedural changes to enhance program integrity and assist in the elimination or reduction of fraud.

The OIG is always available for consultation with agency program managers, line managers and staff as needed. The OIG also interacts with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to address allegations of criminal activity by employees or vendors. Criminal sexual conduct, possession of illegal drugs or weapons in the work place, violation of confidentiality laws, assault and theft of personal property, are examples of alleged criminal activity that OIG would interact with law enforcement agencies on. If an OIG client investigation determines that the elements of fraud are present, the case is either referred for criminal prosecution or to administrative hearings for an **intentional program violation** hearing. If a case is sent to administrative hearings, an administrative law judge decides whether the violation was intentional. If it is found to be intentional, the Food Assistance and/or FIP recipient will be denied benefits for a specific period of time – one year for the first offense, two years for the second offense and permanently for the third offense – as well as reimbursement to the state for any overpayments. If the fraud investigator finds that the violation was not intentional, there is no prosecution. The welfare recipient, however, is still required to reimburse the state for any overpayment received whether it is determined to be an agency error or a client error. Allegations of employee wrongdoing are investigated and if substantiated, are either referred for criminal prosecution or referred to the Office of Labor Relations for administrative disposition.

Welfare fraud creates a burden for taxpayers by increasing the cost of welfare programs. By reducing welfare fraud, the Office of Inspector General fraud investigations increases public confidence in the welfare system and ensures that funds are available to those who legitimately need public assistance.



**Oakland District V staff with Pontiac Mayor Willie Payne (above) and the home they painted (below). During the process, FIA staff had a little fun with paint.**



## Paint The Town

From Mary Anne Cavanagh, Adoption Specialist  
Oakland County Children's District, Bloomfield Hills  
[Cavanaughm@michigan.gov](mailto:Cavanaughm@michigan.gov)

Several counties participated in "Paint The Town" activities in August including staff from Oakland County FIA. Staff members in the county painted two houses in Pontiac on Saturday, Aug. 9.

Staff from Oakland FIA Central Administration/District V painted a one-story house owned by Barbara Metoyer. Meanwhile, District I staff painted a two-story house owned by Ida Vaughn. Participants included Oakland County acting director **Margaret Warner**, District V manager **Melvin Kaufman**, District I manager **Billy Holland**, Oakland County Paint The Town coordinator **MaryAnne Cavanagh**, team leader **John Zerilli** and community resource coordinator **David Tutor**.

Central Administration and District V had a total of 26 volunteers. District I had a total of 15 volunteers. We also need to thank Meijer, Inc. and VG's market. Meijer donated \$100 and VG's donated \$25 for food. One of District V's volunteers, **William Redman**, grilled at both homes.

Most of the volunteers were child welfare and assistance payments staff members; others were spouses or children. We worked from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Everyone had fun and the community benefited from the teamwork. The homeowners were pleased and the homes look great!

Oakland FIA welcomed the opportunity to reach out and support Paint The Town. We are committed to the people of Oakland County.

*Editor's note:* Oakland County administrators are located in Bloomfield Hills and the county has district offices in Pontiac (Districts 1 and 4), Madison Heights (District 2), Walled Lake (District 3) and a children's district office in Bloomfield Hills (District 5). In a related event, about 500 Wayne County employees participated in Paint The Town activities in Detroit and environs Aug. 9. See the Aug 8 FIA news release on this at [www.michigan.gov/fia](http://www.michigan.gov/fia)

**Oakland District I staff completed paint work on the two-story home below.**





## Line of Service Teams

To review membership in any of the 22 lines of service teams, go to FIA-Net and click on the link for Lines of Service Team Members under "Employee Information".

## Lines of service immersion

The Family Independence Agency has been reviewing its programs through a "lines of service immersion" process since February. Twenty-two teams of administrators, employees and interested partners have participated in the process. Each Line of Service team is composed of program and policy office staff, a cross section of field office and other agency staff, as appropriate, along with outside service providers and partners including union representatives. The teams are empowered to identify issues and opportunities to be addressed and set forth action plans to achieve targeted outcomes and better meet our customers' expectations.

"There are about 600 employees directly assigned to one of the 22 immersion teams," said Jeff Krause, an executive on loan from Delphi Corporation overseeing the project for the FIA. "The immersion process isn't the important focus; the real focus is that the organization is willing, prepared and able to address many of the fundamental challenges that have been present for a long time."

The process involves a focused assessment and planning process for each FIA line of service, Krause said. The tasks are cadenced in three stages that answer questions:

- Where am I? – a current assessment.
  - Where am I going? – an outcome driven strategic direction.
  - How am I going to get there? – an action planning and implementation phase.
- Each of these three stages concludes with a review by the FIA Executive Council.

Immersion is a three-part process, Krause said, involving:

- Stage 1 defines the current status of the program, beginning with establishing a clear program description, identification of the primary customer and customer and stakeholder expectations, and assessing the current state of defined outcomes and performance measures. Establishing a solid foundation of the current status is critical to determining what to improve.
- Stage 2 includes defining the mission and vision, value proposition containing clear and specific customer, stakeholder and partner expectations, desired outcomes and measures, and critical issues and recommendations.
- Stage 3 – develop detailed work plans outlining activities, responsibilities and needed resources to accomplish our targeted outcomes and future state. Emphasis will be given to developing concrete, detailed action plans leading to development of the Fiscal Year 2005 budget.

As of mid-August all 22 teams have completed their current assessment. Stage 2 reviews are under way and will be complete in September. An example of a work in progress is included below.

As the lines of service continue through the steps of the immersion process, the directors of the FIA bureaus of Child and Family Services (CFS) and Family Independence Services (FIS) are leading teams to evaluate where their programs can integrate. This "integration" process examines where programs – and, ultimately, the entire Service Delivery Administration – can streamline its outcomes and measures, policy, processes, staffing, and systems. As each line of service has had the opportunity to learn about and evaluate its individual needs and strengths, management from CFS and FIS, through the integration process, is able to examine what each does well, what is duplicated and what needs improvement.

Stage 3 reviews will begin in October. This is a process for continuous improvement and thus the teams will conduct quarterly progress reviews on an ongoing basis. In addition to the Line of Service focus, there are integration reviews to align and balance the efforts across the organization.

Krause said the end result will reflect well-defined program outcomes, streamlined policy, worker support and measurements to ensure success and better services to children, adults and families. It will improve the FIA's business acumen and performance. In addition the FIA will:

- Be customer-focused with clear goals for safety, well being, permanence and independence.
- Have clear roles and responsibilities with delegated responsibilities and increased accountability.
- Use an integrated planning process including customer-based outcomes and links between strategic planning, business planning and budget development.
- Budget development and ownership will be disseminated to lines of service and teams will use continuous improvement processes for cost effectiveness and service delivery.
- Each line of service will have a clearly defined strategic direction with plans to improve service delivery, increase efficiencies and meet customer expectations.
- Employees will be empowered with a clear customer focus, will have streamlined policies and procedures, and improved information technology infrastructure to perform their work.
- FIA, service providers and partners will be better aligned to accomplish a shared vision.
- FIA employees, along with other agencies and partners will increase collaborative efforts to deliver better service.

For more information go to [www.michigan.gov/fia](http://www.michigan.gov/fia) and go to "Inside FIA".



**Jeff Krause**

## Genesee Celebration of Success

Photos and profiles from Denise Chambers, Director  
Genesee County Family Independence Agency, Flint  
[ChambersD3@michigan.gov](mailto:ChambersD3@michigan.gov)

BURTON, Mich. – Genesee County Family Independence Agency honored college scholarship winners, employees and local service providers at its annual "Celebration of Success" ceremony July 23. In addition to awards for students, foster parents and service providers, four Genesee FIA employees were cited for exemplary work at the event. Their nominators submitted these profiles:

■ **Doris Barton**, administrative support. Doris has been a clerk with FIA for many years. She exemplifies excellence in her work. Doris is single-handedly responsible for the Pierson Road District's exemplary administrative hearing statistics, which is almost 100 percent every month. Doris is diligent in monitoring the status of hearings, tracking down staff and coordinating the hearing request from the minute it hits the district until its timely completion. Doris exemplifies this same work ethic when it comes to her other duties.

■ **Jeanette McDonald**, eligibility specialist. Jeanette encompasses everything a model employee and representative of FIA should be. Jeanette has a strong work ethic and is always willing to help her co-workers. She is committed to do the best job and is a team player. Jeanette frequently volunteers to assist with extra activities. She answered questions outside of regular work hours at the Uninsured Expo – a collaborative effort by many agencies to answer questions from uninsured customers and help them enroll in Health Access or other health coverage.

■ **Doreen Raynak**, family independence specialist. Doreen deserves recognition for her excellent work. She has maintained 100 percent standard of promptness for both intake and redeterminations. With the increase of applications of all types, and the effects early retirements had on our agency, Doreen has been outstanding



**Doris Barton**



**Allen Adams**

## Other Celebration of Success award winners

Foster parents of the year:  
**John and Judith Cragg**



Legal advocate of the year:  
**John Prokos**, assistant prosecuting attorney

Child advocate of the year:  
**Chris Flores**, Project Independence

Adult advocate of the year:  
Legal Services – **Pam Keener and Delores Coulter**

Career Advocate of the year:  
**Greater Flint Health Coalition**

The Bob Craig/Juanita Holland Honorary Award:  
**UAW Local 598**

in achieving 100 percent SOP for 20 continuous months. She provides quality customer service during challenging times.

■ **Allen Adams**, social services specialist. Allen deserves special recognition because of his sincere concern for customers. He makes the effort to improve services for the adult customers he serves. His professionalism and friendly demeanor help with his FIS, ES and children's service counterparts. This attribute has proven instrumental in helping his customers meet their spend downs, assuring their medical coverage in a timely fashion. Allen is always more than willing to assist anyone. He always does so with a smile and welcome demeanor.

**Vera Robertson** won the "Volunteer of the Year" award. She has been volunteering at the FIA for four years. She has worked at the "Child's Place" in the McCree District Office. Vera supervises and interacts with as many as 100 children per month. Vera is dependable, kind, and concerned for the well being of the children and is the lead volunteer in child care. She trains new volunteers and provides a valuable service to FIA and its customers.

During the event two young women – **Shanna Thomas** and **Catryina Brown** – were awarded college scholarships. Thomas and Brown are former foster children.



**Catryina Brown**

The two split more than \$2,000 in scholarship money provided by FIA employees, Genesee County director Denise Chambers and her family. Both women were nominated by Project Independence, a program that teaches young adults without family support how to live independently.



**Shanna Thomas**

Chambers started the scholarship fund in memory of two deceased family members. "(Brown and Thomas) don't have the advantages other kids have," Chambers said in the July 24 Flint Journal. Giving the scholarship "is something we would like to do every year," she said.

Brown, 19, enrolled at Michigan State University where her interests include studying criminal justice. In 10 years, "I see myself being a lawyer living in Atlanta, Ga.," said the graduate of Flint Southwestern Academy High School.

Thomas, 18, graduated from Flint Northern High School with a 3.6 grade point average. She is studying accounting at Baker College in Flint and hopes someday to start her own tax business.

## Kent County Casual Days

By **Mary Tubergen**, Administrative Secretary & Casual Day Organizer  
Kent County FIA, Grand Rapids  
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For the employees of Kent County FIA the spirit of giving is alive and evident not only during the holidays but throughout the year.

What began in 1998 with "casual day" donations of \$842 to charity had grown in 2002 to donations of \$18,412. During those five years Kent FIA staff have donated to charitable causes a total of \$38,378 casual day donations. In addition to that total, staff members in the county have donated \$12,234 thus far in 2003, making a grand total of \$50,612 in donations to date.

Casual Day Fridays in Kent County began in 1998 with a request from one of the staff to have a fund raising event to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Each participant in this event was asked to donate a minimum of \$5. In return they would have the privilege of wearing "jeans/dressing casual" and along with that they would receive the traditional "pink ribbon" pin to wear that day designating their reason for dressing casual. Banners were posted in the lobby informing visitors of the reason for staff wearing casual clothing. Results: \$842 raised for this cause. The following year, the event was again held and donations increased to \$995.

In 2000 – due to a tragic mishap that happened within a family of one of Kent County's own staff – a casual day was held to benefit the huge medical expenses incurred for a staff member's infant son, who was the victim of shaken baby syndrome incurred by a service provider. Well over \$2,000 was collected toward this worthwhile cause.

This was the beginning of more casual days to be held at Kent FIA. While the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation continued to be an annual event tied in with the National Lee Denim Day, more requests were made for "casual for a cause" events. A total of four events were held in the year 2000 raising over \$4,500.

The year 2001 brought in an overwhelming \$13,622 in cash donations, with \$4,147 of it being designated for the tragedy of Sept. 11. Many, many boxes of food and toiletry items were also collected along with cash donations for area food pantries and similar organizations.

2002 Casual Days began in January and snowballed throughout the year with events being held on a biweekly to weekly basis ending the year with a total collection of \$18,412 in cash donations by Kent County staff.

Casual day ideas originate through staff suggestions to Kent FIA director Andy Zylstra, who approves the cause for the collection. Each casual day is posted in the lobby so our clients know the reason staff persons are dressed more casual than they might otherwise expect from a professional agency. In addition, each participating person has identification like a ribbon indicating (s)he is dressed casual for a cause.

Those who have benefited from the generosity of the Kent staff range from individuals to charitable organizations and include a migrant family with a father who had cancer, the Women's Resource Center, The Equestrian Therapeutic Riding Center and an endless list of other charities.

If you would like to know more about Kent FIA Casual Day, contact Mary Tubergen at (616) 247-6014 or email her at [tubergenm@michigan.gov](mailto:tubergenm@michigan.gov)